

HEALTH CARE SYSTEM FOR VETERANS

(Mr. ALTMIRE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. ALTMIRE. Madam Speaker, as we listen to the politicized rhetoric we are hearing from the other side today, let's keep one thing in mind; there is no group that will stand ahead of our Nation's veterans when it comes time for this Congress to make Federal funding decisions.

This Congress, after years and years of underfunding the VA, this Congress added \$13 billion of increased funding to the Veterans Affairs health care system. It's the largest increase in the 77-year history of the VA health care system. We are going to send that bill to the President, and if he chooses to veto it, we have the opportunity to override it. I can guarantee you that the Democrats in this House are going to vote to override it.

Madam Speaker, you tell me who is responsible if the veterans don't receive their funding on time.

POLITICS AND PASSPORTS

(Mr. POE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, with all the discussion about protecting our vulnerable borders from illegal intrusion by smugglers, criminals and fortune hunters, Homeland Security is missing the obvious.

Legal ports of entry are as easy for illegals to cross as the remote areas of America's porous borders. Media sources report that the Government Accountability Office did a study that showed at least 10 percent of the illegals who try to unlawfully enter the U.S. at ports of entry are successful.

These failures to detect include drug and weapons smugglers and one individual who had an incurable type of TB who was allowed to illegally enter the United States 76 times. Homeland Security doesn't argue with the results of the GAO but simply makes excuses.

One solution, however, is to require all people entering the United States at ports of entry to have a valid passport where the U.S. can record who enters and who leaves our country. The 9/11 Commission recommended the passport, but politics and the governments of Mexico and Canada and the open borders crowd seem to keep this common sense idea from becoming a reality. The security of this Nation deserves better. We need to use passports.

And that's just the way it is.

SUPPORT OUR TROOPS AND VETERANS

(Ms. SHEA-PORTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Madam Speaker, I was a military spouse, and I am the proud wife of a veteran now.

Of course, I support the veterans. I am also on the Armed Services Committee, and it is in that capacity that I have had the sad task of listening to what the administration has done to our servicemen and women and to our veterans.

We just need to say a name of a couple of hospitals to understand that the President has not honored the commitments to our troops. This democratically led Congress is honoring commitments. We have passed the greatest budget in history for our veterans.

But we have another problem with the President right now. The President wants to give our brave troops only a 3 percent pay increase, and the Democrats are leading the fight for 3.5 percent pay increase.

Why is the President refusing to give our soldiers, who are fighting for us, an increase in pay? Only the President and this administration can answer that question.

I want America to know that I am the proud wife of a veteran. I am here, along with my colleagues, to fight for veterans, and that's what we are doing every day.

OUR VETERANS DESERVE OUR SUPPORT, NOT CHEAP PARTISAN POLITICS

(Mrs. MILLER of Michigan asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Madam Speaker, on October 8, 1954, President Dwight Eisenhower signed a proclamation urging all Americans to observe each November 11 as Veterans Day. That proclamation said the following:

"On that day, let us solemnly remember the sacrifices of all those who fought so valiantly, on the seas, in the air, and on foreign shores, to preserve our heritage of freedom . . ."

There is broad bipartisan support for the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs appropriations bill in both Houses of Congress. The President has indicated that he will sign the bill.

I call on the leadership of this House to bring that bill to the floor, by itself on its own, this week, so that it can be signed into law before Veterans Day. During this time of war, we need to show our veterans and those on active duty that we honor the service and the sacrifice of those who have answered freedom's call.

Please let us rise above the politics and do what is right to honor our veterans.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THE TROOPS

(Mrs. GILLIBRAND asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of Mr. MURPHY's resolution to strongly urge the President to give our soldiers, sailors, air-

men and marines the pay raise that they deserve.

The military families in my district have sacrificed more than any of us could ever imagine, for mothers and fathers who have to run households while their spouses are deployed over and over again, to parents and grandparents that watch the news every night with dismay, to returning soldiers that have to piece together their lives upon the return from a war zone.

These families deserve more than just the cost-of-living adjustment proposed by the President. They deserve a raise. While the 3.5 percent increase that we are able to add to the defense authorization bill is a good start, there is much more that we can and should do. Yet the President may still veto this raise.

I urge my colleagues to vote for this resolution, to tell the President to lift his objection to this well-deserved raise for the brave men and women who serve in our military.

OUR VETERANS DESERVE BETTER

(Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of our Nation's veterans who have fought hard to protect our freedoms and preserve our liberties.

It has been over 140 days, more than 4 months since the House passed the MilCon-VA appropriations bill and nearly 8 weeks since the Senate passed it. My colleagues on both sides of the aisle joined together to craft and pass this important legislation, and the President is standing by, waiting to sign it into law.

Yet it was only last week the Democratic leadership announced that they were finally going to take action, not to pass the bill, but, instead, to use funding of our veterans as a political tool to help ensure passage of a massive increase in spending in the Labor-HHS appropriations bill.

I stand here today in support of our Nation's veterans, in support of MilCon-VA appropriations, and staunchly oppose the Democratic leadership's attempt to use veterans as human shields to pass this bad Labor-HHS bill.

Our veterans deserve better and Congress must deliver.

DEMOCRATS HAVE PRIORITIZED THE NEEDS OF OUR VETERANS SINCE DAY ONE

(Mr. LYNCH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. LYNCH. Madam Speaker, I do want to encourage my colleagues across the aisle to remember the history here.

It was not long ago that the previous VA Secretary, Mr. Nicholson, came before this House and complained that